China’s foreign policy

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China’s rise has transformed the world order in many ways. It is now wielding influences in many aspects of international affairs. While its rising global influence is fundamentally based on its new material capabilities, its changing foreign policies have also made contributions. This chapter examines the evolution of China’s foreign policies in recent decades and the associated consequences.

Overall, China’s foreign policy demonstrates a far more proactive and ambitious posture when compared to that of the past. China is pursuing a concerted strategy to expand its power and influence in international and regional affairs. The results of the shift have both elevated its impacts in world affairs and increased counterbalancing efforts by other countries. So, while China has more resources at its disposal than ever to shape outcomes in its favor, it is also facing rising pressure on its security.

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows. Part one provides a survey of China’s grand strategy from Deng Xiaoping to Hu Jintao, outlining the shift from a passive international posture to a proactive one. Part two of the chapter analyzes key aspects of China’s foreign policies under Xi Jinping. These include China’s US policy, relations with other key major powers, and peripheral diplomacy. Part three of the chapter examines China’s new roles in global governance. Under Xi Jinping, it has become an increasingly important actor in global governance. It has emerged from its role as a passive free rider to become a new provider of global public goods. The last section of the chapter briefly assesses China’s foreign policy shifts in recent years.

Grand strategic shift: shedding Deng’s teaching

China’s foreign policies are keenly informed by its grand strategy, which provides an overarching framework for states to pursue their international interests.

From the early 1990s to the 2008–09 periods, China adopted a grand strategy of strategic restraint. Great leader Deng coined the famous “lying low, biding our time” formula for China to quietly pursue its rise in the international system (Gill 2007: 7–8). His strategic tenets were based on the fact that China was then trying to rise in a unipolar order. He was keenly aware of the strategic dynamics that its rise would generate upon the international
system. In this context, he laid down a set of guiding principles for China’s foreign policies to follow, which are represented by “lying low, maintaining coolness, never taking the lead, and biding our time.”

Deng’s strategic tenets constituted the equivalent of a grand strategy for China, and it profoundly influenced the conduct of its foreign policy for decades. As Avery Goldstein’s study reveals (2005: 111–114), China relied upon benign signaling to preempt other countries’ motives to counterbalance its rise. For example, China systematically pursued “strategic partnerships” with all significant countries to avert containment. In fact, its strategic partnerships covered not only great powers but also middle powers in all continents of the world.

Moreover, China tried to project the image of a status quo rising power. It sought to merge with various Western-dominated international regimes. For example, during the 1990s, China joined the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the United Nations Human Rights Convention, and the World Trade Organization.

All in all, China systematically projected an image that its rise will not destabilize the existing international order. In fact, this attempt was very successful, and China largely succeeded in convincing other countries, which included both major Western countries and its neighbors, that it was a benign status quo rising power that was bent on not repeating the footsteps of Imperial Germany and Imperial Japan.

However, by the 2008–09 period, the aforementioned strategic formula began to unravel. Beijing’s successful hosting of the 2008 Olympic Games and the great financial crisis of the West at the time led to a noticeable shift in China’s foreign policy behaviors. Indeed, the world started to see an “assertive China” that was no longer content with being a quiet and passive actor in international affairs.

Hu, the then Chinese leader, began to pursue a range of foreign policies that sought to raise China’s influences in international and regional affairs. For example, China started to pursue a coherent strategy to expand its soft power. Its strategic elite believed that the declining US dominance in the world was due to the collapse of its soft power. They thus concluded that China’s rise could be accelerated by promoting its soft power (Kurlantzick 2007: 37–45). As a result, it generously funded Confucius Institutes in many countries and expanded the presence of Chinese media in other countries. Moreover, Hu’s China began to use more assertive approaches to pursue its national interests. For example, it developed the “core national interests” concept during this period and applied it to different bilateral diplomatic contexts. If a Western country supposedly violated these core interests of China, for example, if its leaders agreed to meet with the Dalai Lama, Beijing would apply a variety of trade and economic measures to punish that country.

Even more worrisome to other countries, China also started to apply the “core national interests” practice to its territorial disputes with the neighbors. It is reported that in 2009, China began to designate the South China Sea as part of its core interests, resulting in noticeably more assertive policies toward other claimant states that have stakes in this disputed water.

This hard-nosed approach toward territorial conflicts culminated during the 2012–13 East China Sea crisis, which involved a nasty conflict between China and Japan over the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. China applied a full range of diplomatic, economic, and military measures to challenge Japan’s decision to nationalize the islands in September 2012. Many international observers believed that the crisis almost pushed the two countries toward the brink of war.

Therefore, by the second term of the Hu administration, which covered the 2007–12 period, China’s foreign policy started to show noticeable changes. Its foreign policy behaviors
began to reveal patterns that deviated from Deng’s strategic tenets set in the early 1990s. A quiet and passive China was giving way to a more active and even “assertive” China in international and regional affairs. Indeed, China was quickly shedding the influences of Deng’s strategic teaching.

**Xi Jinping’s foreign policies**

In November 2012, Xi replaced Hu as the new Chinese leader. Under him, China’s foreign policies have seen transitions toward a new posture that is bold and proactive in cultivating influences in international and regional affairs.

Soon after he assumed the top leadership post, Xi articulated the “China Dream” slogan that seeks “a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.” International analyses believe that Xi’s China Dream intends to position China at the center stage of the international system (Zhang 2014: 73–74). In general, Xi is portrayed by the Chinese media as possessing a truly global perspective for China’s foreign policies. As suggested by Chinese analyses, he “stands taller and sees further” in terms of pursuing China’s international interests. Indeed, under him, China’s foreign policies have begun to articulate new goals and agendas that concern its relations with other countries and its roles in global governance.

In terms of China’s relationships with other countries, Xi has articulated new approaches toward the United States, other key major powers, and the neighboring countries.

**China’s US policy**

One of the most salient foreign policy initiatives of Xi concerns China’s US policy. Soon upon assuming the top leadership of China, Xi proposed “a new type of great power relations” concept to foster Sino-US cooperation. According to Xi, China and the United States must jointly make efforts to transcend the tragedy of great power politics, which often sees military conflicts between rising states and states in relative decline. Chinese scholars (Xiao 2013: 27) suggest that there are three fundamental elements in this “new type of great power relations.” First, both parties must respect each other’s core national interests. This mutual respect is the foundation of peaceful coexistence by China and the United States. Second, both sides must try to avoid conflicts when they do have differences over sensitive issues. Third, the two sides should work together to resolve regional and global challenges.

This three-tiered concept of “a new type of great power relations” is designed by Xi to stabilize Sino-US relations. However, there are other explanations of his motives. One of them sees China’s attempts to achieve strategic equality with the United States. By accepting this formula, the United States would acquiesce to China’s co-super power status. Therefore, “a new type of great power relations” is seen as China’s covert strategy to accomplish its rise in the international system. Another understanding of the concept suggests that China intends to use “a new type of great power relations” to drive the United States out of the western Pacific, thereby establishing its own regional primacy. It is believed that “mutual respect of core interests” only implies the United States accepting Chinese dominance in this part of the region.

No matter what are the true motives of “a new type of great power relations,” Xi has relentlessly pushed the concept in his policy toward the United States. Initially, the concept seemed to have gained some support in the Obama administration. For example, Xi’s July 2013 summit meeting with Barack Obama was largely seen as a successful event. The setting
of the summit meeting, which is a privately owned ranch in California, suggested reminiscence of a Cold War summit meeting between the two superpowers (Calmes and Myers 2013). At this event, Obama reiterated that the United States welcomes China’s rise and was willing to work with China on a wide range of regional and global issues.

Xi’s December 2014 summit meeting with Obama, which took place in Beijing, also seemed to imply China moving closer toward its goals for “a new type of great power relations.” For example, the two leaders surprised the world by announcing joint commitment to an enforceable multilateral treaty to combat global warming (Landler 2014). This achievement is consistent with Xi’s idea that China and the United States should together lead efforts to resolve prominent global challenges.

However, starting in 2015, Sino-US relations began to move in a more ominous direction. This was largely triggered by the South China Sea conflicts. Starting in 2014, China started to pursue land reclamations for several of the shoals under its control in the South China Sea. This move by China was seen by Washington as a revisionist attempt to change the status quo. Various opinions in Washington demanded that the Obama administration stand firm against China’s revisionism.

In this context, China’s efforts to build “a new type of great power relations” began to unravel. When Xi visited Washington in September 2015, the mood was much more sober than his previous meetings with Obama (Buckley and Perlez 2015). In the latter half of 2016, the US Navy began to implement freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea. China has been highly critical of “US interference” in the South China Sea. Xi’s goal of building a new relationship with the United States that is based on mutual respect of core interests and no conflicts seems to have fizzled.

**Policies toward other key major powers**

Under Xi, China’s relations with other major powers have also shown new trends. In particular, Xi’s policies toward Russia, India, and Japan deserve special attentions.

In March 2013, Xi chose Russia to be his first country to visit since becoming China’s top leader. This gesture of Xi’s indicated China’s hedging motives for its great power relations. While his greatest foreign policy initiative concerns China’s relationship with the United States, in the form of “a new type of great power relations,” Xi is clearly aware of the pitfalls of trying to form a truly cooperative relationship with Washington. The Chinese strategic elite are keenly aware of the dynamics of power transition, which pits the rising state against the dominant state in relative decline. Therefore, while China seeks to build a new framework to regulate its relations with the United States, it has been simultaneously pursuing a hedging strategy that strengthens strategic cooperation with Russia.

This hedging strategy explains Xi’s consistent efforts to deepen China’s relationship with Russia. Indeed, his meetings with Vladimir Putin have been frequent and routine. One result coming out of the China–Russia strategic partnership has been an energy alliance that commits Russia to the long-term supply of natural gases that fuel China’s economic rise. In November 2014, the two sides signed a US$400 billion deal that allows Moscow to supply Beijing with 38 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually for 30 years through pipelines into eastern China from fields in eastern Russia (Yep 2014).

More importantly, China and Russia have begun to pursue genuine security cooperation in an increasing range of areas. For example, in recent years, the two countries have conducted several joint naval exercises in the Pacific. More recently, in May 2016, China and Russia staged a joint missile defense war game. According to analyses (Clover 2016), this
particular military exercise carried special significance as it requires the two militaries to share highly sensitive data and intelligence with one another.

In addition, Russia has upgraded its weapons sale to China. For example, Russia and China have signed an agreement by which the latter would acquire highly advanced Su-35 fighters from the former. This fighter is considered to be a highly capable platform that may change the balance of power between China and its neighbors. Further, Russia has agreed to sell to China S-400 surface-to-air missiles. This air-defense system has one of the longest ranges among similar systems.

The continuous and deepening relations between Beijing and Moscow are not surprising, given the strategic quagmires facing both. Since the Ukraine/Crimea crisis, Russia has been under sanctions by the West. In the meantime, China is facing rising security challenges from the United States in the South China Sea and a resurgent Japan in the East China Sea. The balancing logic of international relations suggests that Beijing and Moscow should find each other convenient partners. So, while China adopts a hoping-for-the-best approach in its relations with the United States, it is also adopting a preparing-for-the-worst approach through its deepening security cooperation with Russia.

India is another major target of China’s major power diplomacy. Amid rising mutual suspicions of each other’s strategic intentions and continuing tension along the Sino-Indian border, Xi has launched a charm offensive against India to dissuade the latter from drifting toward the United States and Japan. In September 2014, Xi made a high-profile visit to India with a mission to project a benign image of China in India (Barry 2014). During the visit, he celebrated Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s birthday with the him at his hometown. Moreover, Xi promised that China would assist India in realizing its dream of economic affluence by heavy investments in its poor infrastructures, like power and transportation. In fact, Chinese officials hinted before the visit that China might invest as much as US$100 billion in India.

The charm offensive by China is motivated by the logic of great power relations. China understands that its rise has triggered security concerns in other countries. In particular, as John Mearsheimer (2001: 34–35) argues in his book The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, major countries are particularly sensitive to power shifts. In fact, power rivalry defines great power relations. China’s rise inevitably worries India. For example, many Indians believe that China has been pursuing a “string of pearls” strategy to strategically encircle India. Moreover, China’s increasing naval activities in the Indian Ocean also make the Chinese navy a looming threat to India.

In this context of rising mistrust of China, Xi pursued an accommodation strategy to improve relations with India. His charm offensive has on paper paid off. For example, Modi reciprocated with a visit to China in May 2015, and he issued warm words on the bright future of Sino-Indian cooperation (Prashantham 2015).

However, the issues that beset their relationship have not improved. First, the lingering border issue still haunts them. It is quite frequent to see face-offs along the border by the countries’ frontline troops. While both governments have made efforts to create a mechanism to de-escalate these situations, these incidents have escalatory dynamics that may lead them into military conflicts.

Second, India is clearly pursuing greater security cooperation with the United States and Japan. Obama has twice visited India, and he eased weapons export to India. Moreover, India signed an agreement with the United States in April 2016 to allow the latter to use its naval bases for recreation and re-supply purposes. Chinese experts view this agreement with great suspicion and apprehension, fearing that India is abandoning its nonalignment foreign policy tradition.
Moreover, India has been strengthening security ties with Japan. In fact, the first foreign country that Modi visited was Japan. The two countries have been pursuing joint naval exercises in both the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. India will also import 12 Japanese-made US-2 amphibious aircrafts designed for maritime patrol and rescue. Once completed, this will be the first arms transfer between the two countries.

Therefore, China’s charm offensive under Xi has not achieved its intended goals. As realist international relations theory suggests, states have to hedge against rising powers because of their assuming-the-worst behaviors under anarchic conditions.

Japan constitutes a different kind of major power diplomacy of China. Ever since the two countries started a highly destabilizing East China Sea brawl over the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in September 2012, Beijing has maintained a high-pressure policy against Tokyo. This first started with Chinese patrols inside Japan’s claimed territorial water after Tokyo nationalized the disputed islands. Now, the Chinese Maritime Police maintains a regular schedule to patrol around the disputed islands amid protests from Tokyo.

Next, China froze high-level visits between the leaders of the two countries. Beijing demanded changes in Japan’s decision before willing to resume the visits. The policy was not changed until November 2014, when China hosted the annual summit meeting of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation in Beijing. As Xi was scheduled to meet individually with visiting leaders, he was confronted with a dilemma of whether he should accord Shinzo Abe with the same protocol. The dilemma was only resolved by a last-minute deal between China and Japan that saw the latter acknowledging that sovereignty dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands does exist. Previously, Japan did not accept the fact that there were disputes over the sovereignty of the concerned islands. As a result of this agreement, Xi met with Abe briefly on 24 November (Kaiman 2014).

In 2015, the relationship between China and Japan seemed to witness minor improvements. For example, China agreed, with South Korea, that their trilateral summit meeting with Japan should be resumed (Mundy 2015). The trilateral summit mechanism was suspended after the China-Japan brawl started in 2012. On November 1, Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang, Japanese Prime Minister Abe, and South Korean President Park Geun-hye met in Seoul to talk about normalizing their relationships.

However, the improvement in Sino-Japanese relations has been superficial. The two sides are deeply bogged down in profound strategic mistrust. Japan views a rising China with great suspicion, seeing dangerous revisionist intentions. China, in contrast, sees a revisionist Abe, who has effectively jettisoned Japan’s postwar Peace Constitution. Indeed, Abe’s government has initiated a wide range of security reforms that would allow Japan to play more active roles in regional security. As a result, the East China Sea remains a dangerous zone of conflicts between the two countries.

Peripheral diplomacy toward neighboring countries

Xi Jinping’s “peripheral diplomacy” has also shown new and bold initiatives. On the one hand, Xi’s policy inherits China’s traditional approach toward its neighboring countries. On the other hand, he has shown the tendency to propose new and big ideas for China’s relations with these countries.

Since the 1990s, China’s standard policy toward its neighbors, especially those Southeast Asian countries, was to project a benign image of peaceful rise. China was aware of the concerns in these countries and their incentives to maintain close ties with the United States. China’s foreign policy goal was to preempt further motives on the part of these countries to
move closer toward the United States. The standard strategy used by China is to tie these countries closer to itself by economic means (Shambaugh 2005: 36–37). In fact, China has become the largest trading partner of every country in the region.

Xi Jinping has continued this broad strategy but also added new ideas. Upon his visit to Indonesia in October 2013, he articulated “a community of common destiny” concept as a goal of future China–ASEAN relationship (SCMP 2013). According to Chinese analyses, this concept embodies a new type of international relations that is based on mutual benefits and win–win outcomes.

Toward Central Asian countries, Xi has also articulated new ideas to promote their relationships. During his September 2013 visit to Kazakhstan, Xi proposed the establishment of a “new Silk Road economic belt” that links China to Central Asian countries.

In 2014, Xi proposed a grander peripheral strategy called the One Belt, One Road initiative, which includes a land-based economic belt and a sea-based economic belt between China on the one hand and Southeast Asian, Central Asian, South Asian and West Asian countries on the other (Su 2016: 7–9).

This ambitious initiative toward China’s neighbors has received different interpretations. One interpretation emphasizes China’s motives to re-balance the US pivot to Asia in recent years. It is argued that China needs to initiate a new round of regional initiative to rally other countries around it (Zheng 2016: 58). Another interpretation sees a more ambitious agenda on the part of China that seeks to establish a Chinese sphere of influence in the Eurasian continent.

However, the implementation of these new initiatives has been rather spotty, and many have criticized the One Belt, One Road initiative for being too vague. Others have also suggested that this ambitious idea could lead to premature strategic overextension by rising China (Wang 2015).

The greatest challenge to Xi’s new peripheral policies has been rising concerns for China among Southeast Asian countries. Their concerns have been defeating China’s intentions to use lucrative economic incentives to woo these countries away from closer ties with the United States and Japan. The biggest contributing factor for their concerns has been China’s recent South China Sea policies.

In particular, Beijing’s 2014 decision to pursue large-scale land reclamation at several of its controlled shoals in the Spratly Islands has triggered greater suspicion of China’s strategic intentions. By 2015, China’s rapid progress with reclamation, which had seen vast expansions in the sizes of these shoals, had turned the South China Sea into a test ground of China–ASEAN relations. The ASEAN countries have shown greater unity in criticizing China’s efforts to change the status quo in the South China Sea.

Therefore, while China has put major efforts into smoothing its relations with its neighbors, it has also managed to damage these relations by its maritime policies.

**China and global governance**

Under Xi Jinping, China is playing new and increasingly important roles in global governance. This trend has reversed the past Chinese behavior as a free rider in global governance. Until recently, Chinese leaders took seriously Deng Xiaoping’s teaching that urged China not to “take the lead” in international affairs. First, China was then a poor developing country and the conventional wisdom was that it should therefore focus on domestic affairs, especially economic development. Second, attempting to be a leader in international relations would certainly trigger suspicion on the part of the United States, which was then enjoying the unique status as being the hegemonic power of the world. Therefore, for Chinese
strategic elite, China should just join Western-dominated global institutions and regimes and enjoy the benefits accrued through their memberships. China’s role was a free rider.

This thinking dominated Chinese foreign policy thinking until the middle of the last decade, when more began to talk about China’s need to become a “responsible” great power. This rising voice was basically induced by China’s rising power and confidence after two decades of high-speed economic growth.

However, the mainstream strategic consensus remained the same. By the 2008–09 period, China still saw itself as a rising developing country that should not bear the burden of global governance. This mindset was revealed by two episodes. First, at the 2009 UN Copenhagen Climate Change conference, China, together with India, Brazil, and South Africa, refused to endorse a binding treaty that regulates emissions of greenhouse gases. China’s excuse is that developing countries’ first duty was to their own people, who need high-speed economic growth and the related benefits. Instead, it was Western countries that should shoulder the costs of global governance and make sacrifices for climate change.

Second, during 2009, the newly elected Obama touted the idea of forming a G2 with China. The idea was that the two most powerful countries of the world should work together to enhance global governance. The Chinese leadership, together with the mainstream Chinese foreign policy community, rejected the idea. The rational was that China remained a poor country and that reality obligated it to focus on domestic welfare, not global leadership.

Both episodes proved that China’s free-rider mindset was deeply entrenched because of the lingering effects of Deng Xiaoping’s strategic tenets. This mindset, however, came to a quick end when Xi Jinping assumed leadership at the end of 2012.

Xi wants China to become a central actor in world affairs, including global governance. His China dream envisions a China leading the world and bettering it. As a result of changes in its leaders’ visions and personalities, in recent years, it has begun to embrace a much more positive approach toward global governance. Rather than being a free rider, China now wants to be a new provider of global public goods.

One important change in China’s roles in global governance concerns its new policy for climate change. No longer rejecting a binding emission treaty for the world community, China has actively sought to take the lead in formulating global solution to the climate change challenge. The moment came at the November 2014 summit meeting between Xi Jinping and Barack Obama in Beijing, when they surprised the world with a bilateral agreement on climate change (Lander 2014). This agreement between the two largest emitters of greenhouse gases paved the way for the later 2016 Paris Conference on Climate Change.

Another aspect of China’s rising roles in global governance concerns its UN peacekeeping efforts. While China has long contributed to UN peacekeeping missions in many parts of the world, until recently Chinese peacekeepers’ roles were confined to noncombat missions.

Under Xi Jinping, China has started to contribute combat troops to UN peacekeeping missions. In December 2014, China announced that it would dispatch a 700 strong unit of peacekeepers to South Sudan and their missions could involve combat roles (Smith 2014). Moreover, at the UN General Assembly meeting in September 2015, Xi surprised the world by announcing that China was willing to contribute 8000 troops to constitute a permanent standby force for UN peacekeeping missions (SCMP 2015). As it is commonly known, the UN’s sluggish responses to humanitarian crises in many parts of the world are largely due to its lack of a standby force that can perform timely interventions. China’s gesture may profoundly affect the future operations of UN peacekeeping. With a standby force of this size, the UN Security Council should be able to make speedy decisions regarding humanitarian interventions in the future.
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In the same speech to the UN General Assembly, Xi also pledged US$1 billion to a 10-year joint China-UN peace and development fund.

Another area of global governance that is seeing new roles of China concerns development financing. Until recently, global development financing has depended on Western-dominated multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank. In fact, China benefited from many programs of the World Bank that assisted its economic development.

Now, China wants to become a new source development financing. In recent years, China has taken a two-pronged strategy to increase its roles in development financing. The first strategy involves generous bilateral development funding by China’s state-controlled policy banks, such as the China Development Bank and the Export and Import Bank of China. According to a recent study by The Financial Times, development lending by these two banks have exceeded the total development lending by six Western multilateral financial institutions, including the World Bank (Kynge 2016).

Second, China has been attempting to promote its own multilateral development finance institutions that can rival the World Bank and the Asia Development Bank. The most prominent effort concerns the newly established Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank that was officially inaugurated in 2016.

This bank, proposed and generously funded by China, is located in Beijing and represented an alternative to the global governance system so far dominated by the West. With a reserve capital of US$100 billion, the bank seeks to fund infrastructure projects in developing countries. While the United States and Japan have refused to join this new multilateral institution, major European countries have decided to become its members.

These recent developments in China’s roles in global governance indicate a new trend in its foreign policy. Xi Jinping has clearly abandoned China’s old free-rider mindset and embraced a new activist approach toward global governance. Indeed, under him, China is emerging as a new provider of global public goods.

Assessment

China’s foreign policies in recent years have undergone major changes. They indicate that China has moved away from Deng’s strategic tenets that urged China to abide by a “lying low” grand strategy. Today, China is confidently exercising influences and pursuing power in different aspect of international relations.

While the trend toward a more activist foreign policy started during the 2008–09 period, it is certain that Xi Jinping has officially ended Deng’s strategic influences on China’s foreign policy. He has proposed new ideas for China’s relations with the United States, key major powers, and the periphery. Moreover, he has made China an increasingly essential actor in global governance. These changes have certainly expanded China’s global influences and status. After all, these are the core goals of “a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” as envisioned by Xi’s “China Dream.”

However, China’s continuous rise and increasingly bolder Chinese behaviors on the international stage have also caused rising counterbalancing efforts by other countries. This first begins with the United States, where more and more members of the foreign policy elite are demanding a tougher approach toward perceived revisionism by China. Recent changes in the China policy of the United States have led to rising instability between the two countries.

Some of China’s neighbors are also resorting to more balancing measures to hedge against perceived Chinese revisionism. For example, many Southeast Asian countries are pursuing closer security cooperation with the United States and Japan.
So, China’s foreign policy faces a quagmire in that when its power and influences rise, it is also facing greater pushback efforts by other countries. The logic of balancing in international relations indicates that China will face mounting pressure from other countries when its power further expands. The challenge for the Chinese leadership is how to devise new strategies to soothe other countries’ concerns.

Unfortunately, hardcore realists also argue that states cannot escape from fundamental dynamics of international relations that drive them into vicious competitions over power and influences. If so, China’s rise will lead to more instability and conflicts in the future.

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